OBSERVATIONS AND STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS FROM THE OMBUDSMAN'S TRIPS AND MEETINGS

*In the **New York Field Office**, managers heavily rely on local systems to track case production. As of December 2006, ICE no longer supports local systems for USCIS, and at the time of the visit, USCIS had not identified a replacement.*

*The **Philadelphia Field Office** reported that when computers were refreshed with updated software, many previously available software packages were not reloaded. As a result, staff could not access previously created documents. At the time of the visit, this office operated with remote IT staff instead of onsite support.*

*In **Newark**, the office reported that the IT Help Desk has conflicting priorities as it is responsible to ICE/CBP and their contracts are administered by ICE.*

***Newark** developed its own receipting system for tracking locally filed applications, but this database was lost when the mandated computer refresh took place.*

*The **Des Moines Field Office** noted that headquarters sometimes issues directives without determining whether they can be implemented in local offices. For example, one memo required scanning EAD applications and forwarding them to the applicable service center, although Des Moines has no scanner. At the time of the visit, if Des Moines had IT problems, the office had to rely on an IT person located in Omaha.*

RECOMMENDATIONS AR 2007 -- 15

The Ombudsman also recommends that USCIS:

(1) Ensure that a computer refresh does not adversely impact local systems.

(2) Make available to each local office software that is authorized to enable offices to continue to use previously created documents in those systems; and

(3) Consider a long-term solution to the onsite support issue such as a central system.